

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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SECDEF WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 18385

SHAPE FOR INTAF

VIENNA FOR MBFR DEL

GENEVA FOR CSCE DEL

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TAGS: GW, NATO, MCAP, PFOR

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT DECLARATION ON BUNDESWEHR
REORGANIZATION

REF: NATO 5136

SUMMARY. DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER ANNOUNCED THE GOVERN-
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MENT'S LONG-EXPECTED BUNDESWEHR REORGANIZATION PROPOSAL

IN THE BUNDESTAG NOVEMBER 29. ASIDE FROM A PLAN TO ORGANIZE A READY RESERVE GROUP WHICH WOULD BE CONSIDERED PART OF THE BUNDESWEHR STANDING FORCE, THE PROPOSAL CONTAINED FEW SURPRISES. ON FIRST INSPECTION IT APPEARS TO BE A USEFUL APPROACH TO THE DEFENSE PROBLEMS WHICH THE FRG FACES IN THE NEXT DECADE, AND WE BELIEVE THE ONLY ASPECT LIKELY TO DRAW FIRE IS THE READY RESERVE CONCEPT (SEE BELOW). THE OVERALL AIM OF THE PLAN IS TO RATIONALIZE THE BUNDESWEHR'S ORGANIZATION SO AS TO MAKE POSSIBLE A BETTER EQUIPPED MODERN FORCE IN THE YEARS AHEAD WHEN THE FRG, LIKE OTHER NATIONS, EXPECTS TO FACE SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY RISING PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT COSTS. THE REORGANIZATION, IT IS HOPED, WILL ALLOW A BETTER ALLOCATION OF DEFENSE FUNDS BY STREAMLINING OPERATIONS, REARRANGING POSITIONS AND ABOLISHING CERTAIN UNITS, WHILE PUTTING SOME INDIVIDUAL POSITIONS ON CADRE STATUS. END SUMMARY.

1. SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE REORGANIZATION ARE AS FOLLOWS. THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE DUTY COMBAT BRIGADES WILL BE INCREASED FROM 33 TO 36. CONSCRIPTION WILL REMAIN THE CORNERSTONE OF MILITARY MANPOWER POLICY, AND 15 MONTHS WILL REMAIN THE PERIOD OF BASIC SERVICE. COMMON OPERATIONS IN THE SERVICES WILL BE CENTRALIZED TO CUT DUPLICATION OF EFFORT. THE ARMY COMMAND STRUCTURE WILL BE REORGANIZED BY MERGING PARTS OF THE FIELD AND TERRITORIAL ARMIES. AIR TRANSPORT CAPACITY WILL BE REDUCED, AND THE RESERVE FLEET AND SOME OF THE AMPHIBIAN UNITS OF THE NAVY WILL BE DISBANDED. AS WE INDICATED EARLIER, THE OVERALL BUNDESWEHR STRUCTURE WILL BE MORE CLEARLY ADAPTED TO DEFENSIVE STRATEGY, AND WILL BE TIED MORE DIRECTLY TO FRG HOME TERRITORY. DETAILS OF THIS ASPECT OF THE REORGANIZATION ARE NOT AVAILABLE, BUT WE UNDERSTAND FROM PAST CONVERSATIONS WITH MOD SOURCES THAT PRINCIPALLY SUPPLY AND SUPPORT UNITS WILL BE ABOLISHED TO MODIFY THE FORCE STRUCTURE AND BRING IT MORE IN LINE WITH THE BUNDESWEHR'S WARTIME MISSION.

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2. THE PLAN AIMS AT INCREASING THE COMBAT CAPABILITY OF THE ARMY BRIGADES BY SHIFTING SMALL UNIT ADMINISTRATION TO A HIGHER LEVEL AND CHANGING PARTS OF THE TOE. SOURCES IN THE FMOD ALSO HAVE TOLD US NONE OF THE COMBAT BRIGADES WILL BE CADRED, BUT ALL OF THE ARMORED INFANTRY AND ARMORED BRIGADES WILL BE REORGANIZED TO INCREASE THEIR COMBAT CAPABILITY. THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY REDUCING THE SIZE OF THE CURRENT COMPANIES AND INCREAS-

ING THE NUMBER OF COMPANIES AND BATTALIONS IN THE
BRIGADES. IN ADDITION, COMPANY AND PLATOONS WILL BE
REORGANIZED TO IMPROVE COMBAT CAPABILITY AND COM-
MAND AND CONTROL AT THE SMALL UNIT LEVEL. THERE WILL
BE, ACCORDING TO MOD SOURCES, ON OVERALL INCREASE IN
THE NUMBER OF TANKS IN COMBAT BATTALIONS.

3. PERHAPS THE CORE OF THE REFORM, AND CERTAINLY THAT
PART MOST LIKELY TO BE STUDIED CLOSELY, IS REORGANIZA-
TION OF THE BUNDESWEHR PERSONNEL STRUCTURE SO THAT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 18385

30,000 POSITIONS, IDENTIFIED AS NOT REQUIRED DURING PEACETIME, ARE ALLOCATED TO A NEWLY CREATED READY-RESERVE (VERFUEGUNGSBEREITSCHAFT). IN HIS SPEECH LEBER STATED SPECIFICALLY THAT BUNDESWEHR'S NUMERICAL STRENGTH WILL REMAIN AT 495,000 MEN. HOWEVER, 30,000 POSITIONS IN THIS PEACETIME STRUCTURE WILL ACTUALLY BE COVERED BY THE READY-RESERVE, WHICH ACCORDING TO THIS CONCEPT WILL ENSURE THE FULL READINESS OF THE FORCES AT THE 495,000 MAN LEVEL. LEBER IS COUNTING, IN EFFECT, 30,000 READY-RESERVISTS IN THE STANDING PEACETIME STRENGTH OF THE BUNDESWEHR.

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4. ON THIS POINT LEBER SAID: "THE ARMED FORCES REQUIRE A PEACE STRENGTH OF 495,000 MEN TO ENABLE THEM TO MAINTAIN THE NUMBER OF REQUIRED UNITS AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE TRAINING OF CONSCRIPTS. HOWEVER, A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PERSONNEL POSITIONS DOES NOT NEED TO BE PERMANENTLY FILLED. THERE SHOULD BE, HOWEVER, IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE SOLDIERS WHO ARE FULLY TRAINED FOR THESE POSITIONS. IN ORDER TO PREVENT MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE SIZE OF THE BUNDESWEHR IS REDUCED, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPLAIN THIS MATTER IN A FEW ADDITIONAL SENTENCES. WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A PEACETIME SIZE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF 495,000 SOLDIERS, 465,000 POSITIONS MUST BE PERMANENTLY FILLED IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF THE BUNDESWEHR. CAREFUL STUDIES HAVE REVEALED, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO STAFF IN PEACETIME SOME 30,000 FUNCTIONS FOR WHICH PERSONNEL POSITIONS NOW EXIST. BY WAY OF EXAMPLE I MAY MENTION ADDITIONAL MEDICAL PERSONNEL, ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL, RADIO OPERATORS AND CABLE MEN, CERTAIN FUNCTIONS IN ENGINEER UNITS, ASSISTANT DRIVERS, ETC. IT SUFFICES TO MAKE SURE THAT SOLDIERS TRAINED IN SUCH FUNCTIONS WHO HAVE COMPLETED BASIC MILITARY SERVICE ARE ALWAYS READY FOR CALL-UP AND AVAILABLE IN THE WARNING TIME EXPECTED BY THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE BEFORE OUTBREAK OF WAR." LEBER ALSO SAID THE READY-RESERVE WILL BE STRENGTHENED BY EXTENDING THE DURATION OF ITS SERVICE FROM THREE TO TWELVE MONTHS AND IMPROVING CALL-UP PROCEDURES. HE CLAIMED THE CREATION OF A NEW READY RESERVE WILL INCREASE THE COMBAT READINESS OF THE BUNDESWEHR BY ENSURING THE FULL DUTY STRENGTH OF OPERATIONAL UNITS ACCORDING TO NATO CRITERIA.

5. WE HAD EARLIER HEARD FROM MOD SOURCES THAT BOTH CDU/CSU AND SPD PARTY FACTIONS HAD BEEN FAIRLY WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS. NEWSPAPER

ACCOUNTS OF THE DEBATE SUGGEST THE PROPOSAL TO
SUBSTITUTE 30,000 MEN ON RESERVE STATUS FOR ACTIVE DUTY
SOLDIERS WAS THE ONLY PART OF THE SCHEME WHICH
DREW CRITICISM FROM THE OPPOSITION. BUNDESTAG DEPUTY
WOERNER, THE CDU DEFENSE EXPERT, CALLED THIS PART OF
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THE PLAN A FICTION, STATING THE GOVERNMENT WAS MIS-
LEADING ITSELF IF IT THOUGHT A READY-RESERVIST WAS THE
EQUIVALENT OF AN ACTIVE DUTY SOLDIER.

6. COMMENT: THE PROPOSAL HAS BEEN IN PREPARATION
BY THE DEFENSE MINISTRY FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND OVER THIS
PERIOD OF TIME WE HAVE HAD MANY EXCHANGES WITH MILITARY
OFFICERS ABOUT THE BASIC CONCEPTS INVOLVED IN THE PLAN.
GENERALLY SPEAKING, THEY HAVE BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO THE
BROAD APPROACH THE GOVERNMENT ADOPTED IN STUDYING
LONG RANGE PROBLEMS OF DEFENSE. THE FINAL PROPOSAL
DRAWS ON GERMAN EXPERIENCE IN TWO WORLD WARS WHEN A
KIND OF READY-RESERVE FORCE QUICKLY FLESHED OUT A
REGULAR FORCE. LEBER'S PROPOSAL IS NOT COMPARABLE,
OF COURSE, IN SIZE AND SCOPE TO THE GERMAN MOBILIZATION
PLANS OF 1914 AND 1939, BUT BUNDESWEHR LEADERS ARE WELL
AWARE THAT GERMANY USED READY RESERVES WITH GREAT
EFFECT TWICE IN THIS CENTURY. WE BELIEVE THE PLAN WILL
LIKELY ENJOY SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT IN THE FRG MILITARY,
AND PROBABLY PUBLIC OPINION AS WELL, IF ONLY BE-
CAUSE OTHER SOLUTIONS, SUCH AS INCREASING THE DEFENSE
BUDGET, ARE NOT PRACTICAL POSSIBILITIES IN A PERIOD OF
SOME ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY COUPLED WITH SOME RELAXATION
OF EAST-WEST TENSIONS.
HILLENBRAND

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